

# You Have The Power To Prevent Kidney Disease



## Learn the Risks



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
National Institutes of Health

Kidney disease is a growing problem in the United States. It affects adults of all ages and races. People with diabetes, high blood pressure, or a family member with kidney failure are more likely to develop kidney disease. African Americans with any of these risk factors have an even greater chance of developing this disease.



Healthy kidneys filter your blood. They remove waste and extra water. They help control the amount of certain chemicals in your blood like sodium, phosphorus, and potassium. The right balance of these chemicals helps your body work well. Healthy kidneys help keep this balance.

When kidneys are diseased they slowly stop doing these jobs. If not treated, kidney disease can lead to kidney failure. When that happens, dialysis or a kidney transplant are the only options for keeping a person alive.

## Stop A Disease That Comes Without Warning

Early kidney disease is a silent problem, like high blood pressure. Kidney disease can become kidney failure with little or no warning, and is usually discovered right before the kidneys fail. If you have diabetes, high blood pressure, or a family member with kidney failure, a doctor or healthcare professional should test your blood and urine for early signs of kidney disease. You can take steps to keep your kidneys working if the tests show kidney disease.

## Steps To Protect Your Kidneys

- 1 Control your blood pressure and diabetes.
- 2 Ask your doctor or healthcare professional to test your blood and urine for kidney disease.
- 3 If these tests show kidney disease, special medicines called ACE-Inhibitors or ARBs can help. Talk to your doctor about these medications.



## Did You Know?

- African Americans are 4 times more likely to get kidney failure than Whites.
- Diabetes and high blood pressure are the two leading causes of kidney failure in African Americans.
- Many African Americans know they have diabetes or high blood pressure, but do not know that they may also have kidney disease.



*Take the card below with you when you visit your doctor or healthcare professional. It will help you ask the right questions.*

## Are You At Risk For Kidney Disease?

- ☐ Do you have diabetes?
- ☐ Do you have high blood pressure?
- ☐ Did your mother, father, sister, or brother ever have kidney disease or failure?
- ☐ Has a doctor ever told you that you had protein in your urine?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you are at risk for kidney disease. Now is the time to talk to your doctor or healthcare professional about getting tested. It could save your life.

## Learn More About Kidney Disease

National Kidney and Urologic Diseases  
Information Clearinghouse (NKUDIC)  
Bethesda, MD  
1-800-891-5390  
[www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov)

For a list of other kidney organizations, including the American Association of Kidney Patients, American Kidney Fund, Medical Education Institute, and National Kidney Foundation, please visit:

[www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov/resources/organizations.htm](http://www.kidney.niddk.nih.gov/resources/organizations.htm)

## What To Ask Your Doctor Or Healthcare Professional:

1. Based on my medical and family history, am I at risk for kidney disease?
2. Would lowering my blood pressure help reduce my risk of developing kidney disease?
3. Do my blood and urine tests show signs of kidney disease?
4. How can I prevent or control kidney disease?

## Tips For Talking With Your Doctor Or Healthcare Professional:

- Know as much as you can about your family's medical history.
- Take this card with you so you don't forget what to ask.
- Write down the answers you get and ask more questions if you need to.
- Bring someone else with you for support and to help you remember what you learn.

## You Have The Power To Prevent Kidney Disease

For more information, call toll free  
1-866-4-KIDNEY (1-866-454-3639)

[www.nkdep.nih.gov](http://www.nkdep.nih.gov)

This brochure is brought to you by the **National Kidney Disease Education Program (NKDEP)**. For additional copies of this brochure or more information about the program, contact the NKDEP at:

**1-866-4 KIDNEY (1-866-454-3639)**  
or [www.nkdep.nih.gov](http://www.nkdep.nih.gov)



*The National Kidney Disease Education Program is an initiative of the National Institutes of Health.*

NIH Publication No. 03-5304 • May 2004

# Do you have **DIABETES?**

**Diabetes is the  
most common cause  
of kidney failure.**

**Y**our kidneys  
keep you  
healthy by  
maintaining the chem-  
icals in your blood.

Diabetes damages small  
blood vessels in your body.

When the blood vessels in your kidneys are  
hurt, your kidneys are not able to do this  
job well. Both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes  
can lead to kidney disease. The longer you  
have diabetes the greater your risk for kid-  
ney disease.

**But, kidney failure can be prevented.**

One way to help prevent kidney disease is to  
control your diabetes. Medication can also  
help prevent or slow kidney disease. Kidney  
disease has no early symptoms so it's impor-  
tant that people with diabetes get tested for  
kidney disease every year.

If you have diabetes, please read this  
brochure and ask your health care provider  
to test your blood and urine for early signs  
of kidney disease.

**You Have The Power To  
Prevent Kidney Disease.**

# Do you have **HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?**

**High blood  
pressure is the  
second leading  
cause of kidney  
failure.**

**Y**our kidneys play a  
key role in keeping your blood  
pressure in a healthy range. And  
blood pressure, in turn, can affect the  
health of your kidneys. High blood pressure  
makes your heart work harder, and over  
time can damage blood vessels throughout  
your body, including those in your kidneys.

**But, kidney failure can be prevented.**

One way to help prevent kidney disease is  
to control your blood pressure. Medication  
can also help prevent or slow kidney disease.  
Kidney disease has no early symptoms so it's  
important that people with high blood pres-  
sure get tested for kidney disease.

If you have high blood pressure, please  
read this brochure and ask your health care  
provider to test your blood and urine for  
early signs of kidney disease.

**You Have The Power To  
Prevent Kidney Disease.**